



# PHILIPPIANS

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**But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state.** Philippians 2:19

In verse 17, Paul had noted his condition, which bore even the possibility of his death. Regardless of life or death, he intended to continue on with the ministry towards those at Philippi, and with the full assurance that the Lord would direct all things according to His wisdom. He now says based on this, "But." The word can mean "but," "moreover," etc. It is a contrast, or a complement, to his own state. He then notes that "I trust in the Lord Jesus..."

Despite being an apostle, he was limited in what he knew concerning future events. He only prophesied when the Lord revealed His intentions. Other than that, he remained dependent on the Lord's ability to take care of future events as they would come to pass; he trusted in that notion. For now, his trust in the Lord was that he would be able "to send Timothy to you shortly."

It is of note that he speaks of Timothy in the third person even though the opening to the epistle stated, "Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ..." Though they were together as greeters in the opening salutation, the words of the epistle belong to Paul alone. Only his words are of divine inspiration for the doctrinal matters of the epistle.

His intent in sending Timothy was "that I also may be encouraged when I know your state." He is writing the epistle as an encouragement to them. In sending Timothy, he would then hear about them and receive the same encouragement. It appears from this that Timothy did not carry the letter but would only be sent at a later date.

The sequence of events, when compared to Acts 16, shows the possibility of the events as laid out in the epistle, but they must be inferred from both. In other words, the two books stand alone, and one was certainly not copied off another as deniers of the Bible claim. Rather, they are independent accounts which sew together seamlessly, but with a precision that avoids any chance that they were intentionally manipulated in order to simply have one confirm the other.

Life application: Getting a note or a word of encouragement out of the blue is a wonderful thing to receive. Take time today to pen a note, make a post, or give a call to someone that hasn't heard from you in a while.

**For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.** Philippians 2:20

The word translated as "For" is referring back to the previous verse and its content –

"But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state."

Timothy was with Paul and he was a treasured fellow Christian because he could fully rely on him. Paul sincerely cared for the Philippians and how they were faring, and he knew that Timothy felt the same. His words, "I have no one like-minded," demonstrate a trust in him that went beyond mere friendship. The word translated as "like-minded" is *isopsuchos*. This is its only use in the Bible, and it means literally "of equal soul." Timothy would have care and concern for those in Philippi in the same Spirit-produced manner as Paul would have.

He then confirms this by saying that Timothy would "sincerely care for your state." The word translated as "sincerely" is an adverb only found here in the Bible, *gnésios*. It signifies "genuinely" or "truly." There would be nothing false in his dealings. His intent was not profit or fame, but the care of others. The word has a kindred adjective which is found a few times in Scripture, once where Paul calls Timothy his "true son" in the faith.

It was understood that he could be fully trusted because of this like-minded heart and attitude. He was one that realized the importance of the concept found in Hebrews 13:17 –

"...for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account."

Life application: There are many who act rightly, but for the wrong reasons. It is a joy when one can rely on another, knowing full well that they are not only determined to do right, but to do so for the right reasons. Such a person can be fully trusted in all matters. Let each of us endeavor to have our heart aligned with our actions, working together in sincerity and understanding that we are accountable to Christ Jesus for all we do.

**For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. Philippians 2:21**

The term used in this verse is literally “the all.” It is a way of saying “all of them.” This is speaking of those around him in connection to the previous verses. He was going to send Timothy to Philippi because he found he had “no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.” None of the others could be relied on in this way.

The reason is then given, “For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.” They were more concerned about their own state, security, and comfort than they were about getting the message of Christ out. It is a sad indictment on the attitude of those around him. However, this must exclude those mentioned in verses 1:14 & 1:17. They had become confident and were emboldened to speak without fear.

Therefore, this cannot be an all-encompassing statement, but one to be taken generally. Further, what Timothy was asked to do was something that a person without specific obligations could do. Others who may have been just as reliable would simply not be able. The words do not indicate this, but they must be read into it based on his previous comments. Those who were able were those who sought their own, not those things which were of Christ Jesus.

Life application: If you are able, are you willing? There are things that must be done in order for the carrying on of the message of Christ – in the church and beyond. In some cases, it is not reasonable to ask someone with obligations to carry on a specific task. However, they are probably able to help pay for the task. A church without people to give cannot continue. Let each of us consider how we will help with the needs of our churches, missionaries, etc.

**But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. Philippians 2:22**

Paul now issues a hearty commendation, and a heartfelt note of approval, upon his son in the faith. Still speaking of Timothy, he says, “But you know his proven character.” Those at Philippi were already aware of him and his faithfulness to the gospel message. The verse proves that Timothy did, in fact, travel with Paul to Philippi. While there, they saw his conduct, both towards the gospel itself, and towards Paul. Thus Paul says, “...that as a son with his father.”

This is the close relationship that he had with Timothy, one which permeates his writings. As noted above, he considered him a “true son in the faith” (1 Timothy 1:2). The word he uses is an endearing one, teknon. It emphasizes a childlike (but not childish) approach towards his father, and especially towards his heavenly Father. For this reason, Paul then makes an apparent break in the sentence by saying, “he served with me in the gospel.”

First he equates him “as a son with his father.” Then he diminishes his own position and says that “he served with me.” The words for serve, *douleuó*, is a verb which indicates serving as a slave where all personal rights and possessions belong to the owner. Together, even in a father-son relationship, they were slaves as they worked for the gospel.

Paul’s words are truly of the heart, both for Timothy and with Timothy as they served under their true Master from heaven.

Life application: We can have a person we mentor who is wholly devoted to us, following our lead and carrying out our every direction, but that may not be glorifying of God. Unless the one we mentor is also serving the Lord with us, we have our priorities out of whack. We are not to be served, but to serve. Let us be careful to not assume that someone we are leading is serving us while we serve Christ. Rather, let us ensure that all are serving only the Lord.

**Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me.** Philippians 2:23

“Therefore” is given based on the words of verses 19-22. First, it is connected to Paul’s desire to know the state of those in Philippi. Secondly, it concerns the notable character of Timothy who was being sent for that very task. Because of his proven character, and because of his faithful service in the gospel, Paul hoped to send him without any delay with the exception of waiting to see “how it goes with me.”

He was awaiting notice of his state as a prisoner. Would he be released? Would he be confined longer? Would he face the executioner? These things needed to be determined, and once that word was known, then Timothy would be dispatched as a follow-up to this letter.

As we can see, the letter of Paul was to be sent immediately. To him, the matter of doctrine and harmony within the congregation was of paramount importance. Such should always be the case. We should count our own state as of less importance than that of others who are facing doctrinal error or conflict in Christ.

Life application: Let us continually magnify the Lord and His word in all we say and do. We should never withhold that which will build up others for our own personal reasons. In all things, let us let God be magnified first and foremost.

**But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.** Philippians 2:24

Paul had just previously indicated that it was his hope to send Timothy to him immediately, and at a time when he had determined his own fate. Now he continues with this thought with the word “But...” It is less of a contrast than it is a complement to what he just said. For this reason, it is often translated as “And” instead of “But.”

His next words, "I trust," show that he has expectations which he feels confident will come about. In chapter 1, he indicated his surety that he would be released in accord with the Lord's will for him. This is repeated now with a confidence that is "in the Lord." The tenor of his words shows that his state of confidence – not just in this matter, but in his every thought – was in complete harmony with his faith in the Lord. As surrounded by the air he needed to breathe, so he was surrounded in his surety of the Lord's presence around him and guiding him.

Finally, his trust in the Lord was a confidence "that I myself shall also come shortly." His decision to send Timothy was to be carried out as soon as word concerning him was given. It would be as if a runner was sent with news from the battle lines ahead of the returning army. After that, and as quickly as his affairs could be set in order, he intended to follow after Timothy to join the brothers at Philippi.

It could also be that Timothy would be told to visit other churches, quickly carrying the message of Paul's release from one to another. In time, he would make a slower and longer visit to each of the churches. Thus, Timothy's visit would be one of exciting news and comfort; Paul's visit would be of fellowship and more comfort. His words in these verses are rather similar to those found in 1 Corinthians 4 –

"For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church. ... But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills..." 1 Corinthians 4:17 & 19

Paul was consistent in his mind, thoughts, and attitude concerning the major outline of his life. Because of this, the lesser details would eventually find their proper place. Of this, he was sure.

Life application: We should be careful in our personal words to not ascribe things to the Lord of which we are unsure. It is very common to hear people say, "The Lord spoke to me," or "I got a word from the Lord." However, if we follow up with their claim, way too often, the "word" they claimed never came to pass. This is a bad place to be when we stand before Him. We can show a hope and a confidence in something without making false claims.